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Washington Wire

ANTI-LEAK POLICIES begin to curb the flow of information to the press.

Some officials reject routine interview requests. A usually helpful national-security aide refuses to talk to reporters; asked if the chill is on, he says, "No, the freeze." Others warn they may soon clam up. Even the head of the Unemployment Insurance Service decided at first against giving interviews. He later relented.

But a flap over the Agriculture Department's tighter rules is dying down. Most officials ignore an order to get permission to give "major interviews." Leaks continue, anyway, on minor matters like a butter sale to New Zealand. Some officials balk at taking lie-detector tests designed to track down sources of Pentagon leaks.

The mixed picture results mainly from lack of detailed White House rules. They're delayed by officials' differences on how strict to get.